

fond of art, whether painting, sculpture, architecture, or music. He was an accomplished pianist and organist. He lectured on the history of art for many of the last years of his life. His critical judgment of works of art had been cultivated by prolonged residence in Europe. He was a man of sensitive and delicate nature. His modesty was almost a fault. He was the most agreeable of companions and the most faithful of friends. A more refined, gentle, cultured, lovable man, one would seldom meet. Withal he had a most devout spirit. He was almost from boyhood a communicant of the Protestant Episcopal Church, but was in most catholic relations with Christians of every name. He represented the finest type of American scholar, college officer, Christian gentleman.

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*Obituary Notice of Franklin B. Gowen.*

*By Richard Vaux.*

*(Read before the American Philosophical Society, March 7, 1890.)*

Called to our Federal Capital, in the District of Columbia, by onerous and perplexing professional engagements, Franklin B. Gowen there died on the 14th day of December, 1889.

His life was remarkable. It was a lesson and an example. His mind was of more than exceptional power. His energy seemed exhaustless. A courage that met, without hesitancy, opposition and antagonism, was animated by a temperament so sanguine, that defeat was obscured by the brilliant promise of anticipated success.

Mr. Gowen was devoted to literature, assiduously cultivating his taste for its highest standards, proficient in scientific knowledge, to which he applied intelligent study, and an eloquent, impressive and learned lawyer.

He possessed capacities for the management of great enterprises involving great interests, so that it may be said of him, he was the peer of the distinguished men of his day.

His public speeches were masterly. In the discussion of principles, the treatment of details, grouping the arguments as to each, he brought out the strongest points of his contentions with a forensic ability recognized to be of a high order.

He was capable of augmented possibilities. His memorable and successful effort to maintain the safeguards of imperilled rights and public security attests his force of character, latent till stimulated into action. This statement is not amenable to the criterion of a too florid coloring; it is rather in harmony with the natural tints of his character.

Earnest, aggressive, sanguine, capable, laborious, his capacities and acquirements were forces that demonstrated his powers. It has been said by high authority, that if elsewhere, certainly in Philadelphia, her most

prominent citizens are best understood and appreciated after they are buried.

Franklin B. Gowen was born at Mount Airy, near Germantown, in the county of Philadelphia, February 9, 1836. He inherited some of the marked mental and moral traits of his father, whose life in Philadelphia demonstrated his striking individuality.

It can hardly be doubted that what is known as heredity is the outcome of the parents' characteristics in their descendants. Mr. Gowen's character in this respect may be judged by the recognized principles of pathognomy.

Yet in his social relations he was genial, agreeable and attractive. His acquirements rendered him notable in association with cultured and refined society. His information, belle lettres and scientific reading and the charm of his conversation were thoroughly appreciated by his personal friends and associates.

Mr. Gowen was, at an early age, sent to Emmetsburg, in the State of Maryland, to receive the instruction which made the college located there so eminent as an institution of learning.

After marked proficiency in his studies, he returned home and finished them at the Moravian School, at Litz, Lancaster county, Pa.

His youthful training was intended to qualify him for a business life. The first introduction to his proposed avocation was entering the store of Mr. Baumgardner, at Lancaster. Acquiring sufficient knowledge of the business, Mr. Baumgardner sent him to his iron furnace, at Shamokin. All this was prior to his majority, for at twenty years of age Mr. Gowen formed a partnership with a Mr. Turner, for the purpose of mining anthracite coal. This promised well, but in the monetary panic of 1857 the firm failed, with liabilities amounting to some \$60,000. Mr. Gowen seems to have been disappointed in his business venture. He then studied law at Pottsville, Pa., with Mr. Benjamin W. Cumming. On the 31st of May, 1860, he was admitted to the bar of Schuylkill county.

To indicate the integrity and energy of Mr. Gowen, he paid in full the liabilities of the firm of Gowen & Turner. In 1862, Mr. Gowen was elected the District Attorney of Schuylkill county. His legal standing being assured, he continued to represent the pleas of the commonwealth in Schuylkill county until his increasing professional business required him to resign that office, and devote himself entirely to his private practice.

Mr. Gowen was the counsel of the Reading Railroad Company in 1864, and in 1867 it became necessary from the increase of his professional duties to remove to Philadelphia. He was then in the thirty-second year of his age. In 1869, Mr. Gowen was elected President of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company.

He reluctantly accepted the position at the request of a majority of the controlling interest in the company. From this period in his life, Mr. Gowen began a career burdened with great responsibilities. The large

interests which were involved in the management of this corporation are not easily to be described. It may be said, however, that the holders of the various securities of the company, and those who were engaged in providing the chief traffic of the road, were not usually unanimous in their agreements as to the conduct of its affairs.

From 1869 to 1884, he was President of the company. He then resigned, and in 1886 he was again elected President and served till 1888, when he again resigned.

It was well said of Mr. Gowen's Presidency, that it was "fifteen years of struggle and achievement."

Reference to Mr. Gowen's administration of the business and policy of the Reading Railroad is here out of place.

The interests involved were enormous and the contentions of the parties representing them were inspired by efforts to control the management vested in the executive authority of the company.

The President and the Board of Directors were subjected to the consequences of divergent views and opposing opinions of their constituents.

Mr. Gowen's responsibility was not divisible.

During his Presidency he met antagonisms, hostilities and obstacles that would most likely have overwhelmed a less courageous, able, self-poised and confident administrator. Criticism followed the course he pursued—severe criticism often—but patiently listening, ready to defend himself, he followed out his plans. His views were broad, far reaching and based on what, to his extraordinary comprehension of the vast possibilities of the Reading Railroad, were vital to the permanent triumph of the producing and transporting capacities of this coal-carrying company.

Securing coal fields by purchase, thus owning the sources of supply of freight for the support of the traffic and the augmentation of the earnings, and with the topographical advantages of his line of road, Mr. Gowen conceived that he could place the Reading Railroad beyond the reach of competing rivals.

This much is said in some sort to indicate the character and capacity of Mr. Gowen. And let it be proclaimed that during his management of the company, amid all the contentions it occasioned, in the direction of the policy he regarded as essential for the success, not a word was ever uttered that expressed a doubt as to his spotless integrity.

*The Engineering and Mining Journal*, of New York, a professional periodical of high standing, in an editorial reference to Mr. Gowen, thus epitomizes his character :

"Mr. Franklin B. Gowen was undoubtedly one of the most admirable men this country has produced. To brilliant ability, eloquence, undaunted courage and an incorruptible honesty which placed him, even with his bitterest antagonist, above the faintest suspicion of doing a dishonorable thing, Mr. Gowen united a winning personality that firmly attached to him all who had the honor and pleasure of his acquaintance.

“His devotion to duty was not lessened when it called for the risk of his life and fortune, and the administration of the immense interests of the Reading Railroad and Coal and Iron Companies was never influenced by his personal advantages, but was always and solely in that of his stockholders. A man of firm convictions and of utter and unconcealed abhorrence of dishonesty in every form, he naturally made many enemies as well as friends, but even his enmities were to his honor.

“Mr. Gowen was a firm and very enthusiastic believer in the immense value of our anthracite coal deposits, and he secured for the Reading Coal and Iron Company the most valuable mineral estate in the world. It is true much of it was purchased with bonds, and this involved an interest account so heavy as to have crippled his companies; but the policy of controlling this magnificent source of future profits, both for the coal company and for the railroad was, when exercised in moderation, a far-sighted and wise one. Mr. Gowen’s sanguine temperament may have led him to a larger investment, in undeveloped lands, than was prudent, but there is no question of the immense value of the estate (which covers fully one-half of all the anthracite coal in Pennsylvania), that he purchased for his company, or the moderate cost of the same.

“In the council chamber he was an acute and profound legal adviser; at the bar a pleader of unsurpassed logical force and magnetic influence. Handsome, witty and eloquent, he was master alike of the rapier and the battle ax. After the glamour of his speech had passed away, there remained the convincing strength of his statement.

“These qualities, together with his fearless determination, found, perhaps, their highest exhibition in the victory which he won, at the end of more than three years of patient preparation, over the secret society of murderers which had so long maintained a reign of terror in the anthracite regions. If Mr. Gowen had never achieved anything else, this one performance would have entitled him to the gratitude of mankind.”

Operating the coal mines that yielded profit to the railroad, employing large numbers of laborers, supplying the demand for their products, it came to pass that, by violations of law, life and property in the mining localities were put in peril. Arson and murder were committed by members of secret combinations of men in this coal region. Mr. Gowen undertook the suppression of this combination and the punishment of the guilty. He went before the legal authorities of Schuylkill county, indicted the leaders of the “*Molly Maguires*,” as this combination was called, convicted them, and some were hanged and others imprisoned. The combination was destroyed and peace followed.

His ability as a lawyer could not be better tested. His personal courage could not have been better proved. Fidelity to public duty and the assertion of the obligation to society by one of its citizens have no nobler attestation.

Mr. Gowen’s domestic life was hallowed by his unpretentious religious

principles, which were expressed in his communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church.

In his profession he was behind none of the leaders of the bar, for Mr. Gowen ranked among the great lawyers of the country.

His last, or among the latest of his professional achievements, was the decision (March 20, 1890), of the Supreme Court of Ohio, in the case of Rice against the railroads under the Inter-State Commerce Law.

Had Mr. Gowen been tempted by the inducements held out to him to enter political life, he would have attained the distinction of a statesman in that high order of men who made their mark in their time on our history. His extraordinary capacity for orally expressing his opinions, his command of language, his wonderful memory, not needing the aid of written notes to direct the course of his argument, the attraction of his manner and his personal presence would have established his position as an orator.

Less than is here said would have been an injustice to the memory of our lamented colleague. It is at best but a tentative effort, and when the color of the perspective round the prominent figure, which Mr. Gowen became in the circle of the physical scientists of his day, is mellowed by age, then his biography will be the just tribute to his phenomenal character.

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*Obituary Notice of Leo Lesquereux. By J. P. Lesley.*

*(Read before the American Philosophical Society, March 21, 1890.)*

The venerable botanist and palæo-botanist, Leo Lesquereux, of Fleurier, Switzerland, late of Columbus, Ohio, has been a member of this Society since his election, January 18, 1861. Born in 1806, and dying on the 20th of October, 1889, his long life was full of unusual adventures, and great discoveries.

When a boy, on one of his excursions to find new flowers, he fell from the top of the mountain which walls the Val de Travers on the north. Rolling and dropping from cliff to cliff, a descent of several hundred feet, he was found by his family hanging in the branches of a tree, mangled in every part of his body, and apparently dead; but after lying insensible for several weeks, he recovered health and strength, and continued his boyish explorations as though nothing had happened. The place is in full view of his father's house in Fleurier, and is pointed to by the villagers as Lesquereux's cliff. Just below it to the right the Pontarlier Railway line from Neufchatel to Paris, leaves the Val de Travers and enters the gate-like gorge across which the Swiss stretched their iron chain to keep the marauding Burgundians in check.

This gorge is similar in its general features to that of our Lehigh river